

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating the allowability of claim 9.

Claims 1-7 are pending in the subject application, among which claim 1 is the only independent claim. Independent claim 1 has been amended to incorporate additional features disclosed in paragraph [0043] of applicants' published application (see US 2007/0289685) and recited in allowable claim 9 and its intervening claim 8, both of which have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 10 and 12-21 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer in view of the prior Election Requirement. Claim 11 has been previously cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Additional formality changes have been made to the claims to address certain formality issues raised in the Office Action and to conform the claims with U.S. practice without narrowing the scope of any claim element contained therein. For example, claim 1 has been amended at least partially following the Examiner's suggestions. The formality rejection to original claim 9 has also been taken into consideration, when amending independent claim 1 to incorporate original claim 9 and in view of applicants' disclosure in paragraph [0043] of the published application as well as the drawing figures of the subject application.

No new matter has been added.

In view of the above claim amendments, independent claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-7 are allowable for at least the same reasons that claim 9 is allowable.

The Office Action objected to applicants' Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) filed September 5, 2006 for failure to provide copies of the foreign references. In response, applicants submit that all three foreign references listed on the IDS were cited in the International Search Report of the prior PCT International Patent Application. Accordingly, copies of such references have been supplied by WIPO to the USPTO.

For the Examiner's convenience, applicants enclose herewith copies of the foreign references and their English equivalents or abstract, together with an updated Form SB/08A. The Examiner is hereby respectfully requested to consider all three foreign references and made them of record of the subject patent application.

Based on all of the above, the present application is now in proper condition for allowance. Prompt and favorable action to this effect and early passing of this application to issue are respectfully solicited. Should the Examiner have any comments, questions, suggestions or objections, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned in order to facilitate reaching a resolution of any outstanding issues.

Respectfully submitted,
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